



5-Year Plan (2009 to 2014) **Wahkiakum Conservation District**

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Organization of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

The Wahkiakum Conservation District is a political subdivision of the State of Washington whose authorities, powers and structure derive from Washington State Law, specifically the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 89.08. The Wahkiakum Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in 1952.

A board of five supervisors govern the District, three of whom are elected by residents within the District and two who are appointed by the State Conservation Commission. The board may also include an unlimited number of associate members. All of the member's time and effort in service of the District is on a volunteer basis.

Function of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

To coordinate the delivery of and maintain the District's capacity to provide technical assistance to landowners within the district promoting sound resource management.

- Provide technical assistance to walk-in and call-in customers, provide site visits, and prepare conservation plans that make efficient and effective use of the landowners' resources.
 - Assist in the delivery of current financial assistance programs, and technical assistance from our conservation partners.
 - The District obtains funds through local, state, and federal grants, in-kind contributions, and cost-share from public and private entities.
 - To make available educational resources and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local community.
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Who We Serve & Why

Land users in need of assistance in conservation and development of their resources may seek assistance from the District. Assistance is offered equally on a voluntary basis to all users of resources without regard to race, creed, or gender.

Those expressing need become cooperators of the District by entering into a cooperative agreement with the District. This sets the stage for the District to help the land user develop a conservation plan based on an inventory of the resources, assessment of the resource capabilities and limitations, and desires or goals of the resource user.

Professional and technical specialists from various agencies, both public and private, who assist the District through a memorandum of understanding, extend help provided by the District in this planning process.

The District also assists landowners in complying with regulatory programs administered by local, state, and federal authorities. Although the Conservation District has no autonomous regulatory authority it is officially recognized by such authorities as a local source of help to people required to comply with environmental laws, rules, and regulations.

Mission of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

Working voluntarily with our citizens and other organizations, Wahkiakum Conservation District will conserve and improve the natural resources within the District and guide resource development and use to provide the highest quality of life for present and future citizens.

Vision of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

Over the next five years, we see the Wahkiakum Conservation District assisting Landowners within our district and:

- Providing high standards of service for our customers;
 - Having stable financial backing to serve local needs;
 - Strengthening our partnerships with other natural resource organizations, both governmental and non-governmental;
 - Becoming locally perceived as the county leader for natural resource issues; and
 - Developing our locally led watershed planning process throughout the District.
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Values of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

- Support the rural character of the district
 - Education of local land users on conservation practices by means of technical assistance.
 - Sound resource management for agriculture, forestry, and other land uses emphasizing soil, water, air, plants, animals and human considerations.
 - Economic viability for community and landowners.
 - Monitor and encourage the use of new or technical developments that offer promise toward enhancing conservation of natural resources, or improving the quality of our resources.
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Natural Resource Priorities and Goals:

The Wahkiakum Conservation District Supervisors have developed, with input from the public and stakeholders, the following specific priorities regarding natural resources within the District. The priority natural resource issues are discussed in the following.

- Promote watershed health and water quality by assisting landowners, land managers, and resource agencies with coordinated watershed management plans that are ecologically and economically sound.
 - Promote fish habitat restoration and provide technical assistance in the reduction of stream erosion-sedimentation and stream migration.
 - Actively encourage conservation education through community outreach.
 - Promote agriculture and land use management practices that incorporate best practices and are ecologically and economically sound. Encourage the retention of prime and unique agriculture land for agriculture use and work to increase farm production in ecologically sound ways.
 - Reduce the burden of non-native, invasive and noxious plants in the District and educate landowners regarding such plants.
 - Encourage the management of upland habitat in a manner that will retain its value and function.
 - Encourage cooperative planning among agencies involved in land use activities in both urban and rural areas.
 - Provide the County Commissioners and local planners with resource data and interpretations to assist them in making sound land use decisions.
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Natural Resource Metrics

A set of metrics was developed for each priority area. It is difficult to specify metrics or measurable outcomes in distant outyears. Because of funding uncertainties, ecosystem changes and natural events, such as fire or flooding, it becomes difficult to set specific metrics for years into the future. Rather than setting metrics for years in the future, the Wahkiakum Conservation District has developed a set of metrics that involve monitoring specific parameters over time in order to measure improvement. In this way, outcomes can be measured against expectations and budget. The set of metrics for each priority area is provided below.

- Watershed health and water quality: The District will monitor the number of landowner agreements, the number of watershed management plans and will establish baseline water quality measurements for future monitoring.
- Fish habitat restoration: The District will monitor yearly the number of landowner agreements, species diversity by stream, number of instream structures and number of linear feet of stream bank protected from erosion. Estimate sediment load in applicable streams. The extent of riparian restoration will also be monitored.
- Non-Native and noxious plants: Track population density of invasive species in areas treated; monitor the extent of reestablished native plants and establish a baseline of invasive species critical areas.
- Agricultural land retention and land use management: Monitor acres under usage for agriculture. Track changes in land use based on assessors data.
- Upland habitat: Monitor changes in upland habitat and acres under active management.

Priority Geographic Areas:

The Conservation District has conducted meetings and public outreach forums in order to identify areas that the Conservation District, stakeholders and the public agree are priority geographic areas within the District. The priority areas were identified from a variety of perspectives including landowner issues, noxious and invasive weeds, instream habitat (both resident and anadromous fisheries), and forest and agricultural land use concerns. These areas include:

- Skamokawa Creek Watershed. Concerns include fish habitat restoration, noxious weeds, siltation and sediment control, and the Dead Slough bottomland.
- Mill/Abernathy/Germany Subbasin (shared watershed with Cowlitz CD). Work in cooperation with the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board and the Department of Ecology Intensively Monitored Watershed program in the Mill, Abernathy, and Germany Creek community watersheds
- The community encouraged the District to try to find resources to expand work into the Gray's River and Elochoman River watersheds while continuing work in the Mill/Abernathy/Germany Creek Sub-basin

The WRIA 25, 26, and 27 draft watershed plans identify critical geographic areas (watersheds) with respect to available water supplies. The Federal Clean Water Act 303 (d) maintained by Washington State Department of Ecology identifies critical geographic areas within the county with respect to water quality. A map of the Wahkiakum County priority geographic areas is shown in Appendix B.

Information – Education Priorities and Goals:

Continue providing community service activities and promote an understanding of land use through sponsorship of forums, meetings, training sessions, and participation in local natural resources oriented events, and use of local media.

- The Conservation District will emphasize education and information sharing when delivering technical assistance to landowners or communities within the district.
- The Conservation District will foster a better working relationship with local media to keep our community informed of natural resource issues, concerns, and opportunities
- The Conservation District will partner with Department of Natural Resources Stewardship Forestry Program and Small Forest Landowners Office to continue to delivery of forestry, technical, educational, and financial assistance. (Forest Stewardship Coached Planning Course)
- The Conservation District will continue to partner with WSU Cooperative Extension to host the “Living off the Land” course and other educational activities.
- The Conservation District will successfully partner to conduct the education/outreach activities including regional Envirothon, county fair, and the annual dinner meeting/banquets.
- Continue to participate when possible in local activities oriented around natural resources (e.g. earth day celebrations, classroom partnerships, and assistance to student groups for tree planting days, annual tree sale)

District Operations Priorities, Goals:

- The Districts’ goals are to be effective and efficient in accounting, grant vouchering, personnel management, Supervisor elections and appointments, Supervisor and Staff training / development, annual audits, and long range and annual planning and reporting. Wahkiakum Conservation District will properly manage public monies.
- Increase efficiency of District Operations resulting in conservation on the ground. Continue to promote the concept of a natural resource “One-Stop Center” for natural resource needs. Coordinate with NRCS, WSU Cooperative Extension, DNR Stewardship, WDFW, DOE, and others.
- Wahkiakum Conservation District will continue to develop and generate capacity needed to adequately meet the needs of our constituents. This includes maintaining the technical staff necessary and generating funds to help implement restoration projects or implement improved management practices to resolve natural resource issues and concerns.

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Wahkiakum Conservation District

- Population continues to rise in rural Wahkiakum County resulting in changing land use, fragmentation into smaller parcel sizes, and increased number of landowners who may not be aware of existing rules and regulations and may be uninformed regarding best management practices.
- Grant competition and complexity: There is increased competition for the local, state, and federal resources made available to address natural resources. Grant funds are becoming increasingly program driven; limiting the ability for the district to effectively utilize funds to address local resource issues and concerns. The district is at risk of being directed by funding rather than local need.
- It appears that the district needs to become more proactive and adopt a legislative strategy if the district intends to comply with provisions of RCW 89.08 and address the natural resource needs within Wahkiakum County.

Strategies to Address Trends

Conservation Strategy:

- Continue to develop and encourage communities to participate in Community Watershed Planning (CRM)
- Improve District capacity to provide technical staff capable of meeting the needs of the community we serve.
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy to increase awareness of the district and district activities
- Develop and implement a mechanism that will serve to inform and educate “new” landowners
- Keep abreast of growth trends in the county, become more active and provide input to county planning,

Funding Strategy: locally attractive, partnerships, guidance to WSCC, Funding proposals

- Strive to make the district more attractive to local government and agencies to secure local funds
- Continue to develop and build working relationships with resource partners to increase capacity and develop efficiencies at providing service to our customers
- Provide guidance to WSCC in the development of funding proposals so that districts may better accomplish their local mission
- Continue developing funding proposals to granting entities to advance the district’s goals and objectives
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Legislative strategy

- Pursue a Legislative Resolution to evaluate state grant strategy vs. intentions. There are increasing numbers of granting entities resulting in less flexibility at resolving local issues and increased administration and project costs.
- Develop a district strategy to effectively engage local, state, and federal elected officials with regards to conservation issues.

Staffing Needs

- District Manager
- Resource Planner / Technician
- Engineer or Engineer Technician
- Education/Outreach Program Coordinator
- Bookkeeper

Annual Budget Needs

Current Budget needs \$225,000/year.

Anticipated Operating Budget based on desired staffing and full office space - \$255,000/year.

Key Decision Makers

The Board of Supervisors, district manager, grantees, resource partners, local government, state government, federal government, and local landowners are the key decision makers.

Appendix A
Priority Actions – 12 Months: FY2010

Program Area: District Operations

Goal(s): To maintain effective and efficient operation including accounting, grant administration, personnel management, and implementation of district policies.

Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program include WSCC implementation, WSCC CREP, WSCC LV, WSCC Basic Funding, and GSRO grant funds.

| Activities for FY2010 | Target Dates | Person Responsible | Time (Days) Required | Estimated Funding |
|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| District Operations Submit grant vouchers and misc. grant paperwork as required. Prepare business information for Board meetings/Board Meeting Mid Month AP/AR Annual Plan of Accomplishments Submit reports as required (quarterly and semi annual reports) 3 rd Quarter 4 th Quarter 1 st Quarter 2 nd Quarter Prepare Southwest Association Meeting Prepare for and conduct annual election Arrangements to participate in WACD Annual Meeting Continue to prepare and submit grant applications as needed Prepare annual plan of work/review Long Range Plan | Monthly Monthly Monthly 9/1/2009 10/15/2009 1/15/2010 4/15/2010 7/15/2010 10/2009 10/2009-4/2010 10/2009-11/2010 1/2010-5/2010 5/1/2010 | Mgr/BK Mgr/BK/RT Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK | 6/60 6/36/6 2/24 2/1 2/2 .5/2 .5/5 .5/5 15/1 1/1 | |
| Complete and submit annual financial report Complete internal audit Apply for Basic Funding | 5/1/2010 3/1/2010 5/1/2010 | Mgr/BK BK Mgr/BK | 1/10 5 1/5 | |

Program Area: Watershed Management

Goal(s): Continue to develop and secure funding to maintain the District's capacity to assist watershed communities with planning and implementation on a watershed level.

Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program includes WSCC implementation and Governors Salmon Recovery Office.

| Activities for FY2010 | Target Dates | Person Responsible | Time(Days) Required | Estimated Funding |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Watershed Management Planning and Implementation | | | | |
| <u>Mill/Abernathy/Germany Subbasin (shared WS with Cowlitz CD)</u> Continue to initiate CRM process in cooperation with the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board and the Department of Ecology Intensively Monitored Watershed program in the Mill, Abernathy, and Germany Creek community watersheds | June 2010 | Mgr/RT | 3/2 | |
| Complete Implementation of the Davis Stream Restoration Project | October 2009 | Mgr/FB | 2/2 | |
| Implement the Strom/Davis Stream Restoration Project | March 2010 | Mgr/FB/RT | 10/2/2 | |
| <u>Skamokawa Creek Community Watershed Project</u> | | | | |
| Implement remainder of the Speranza Farm plan (CREP, fences, alternative water, minor lwd maintenance) | June 2010 | Mgr/FB/RT | 5/5/5 | |
| Implement minor maintenance on Walters Stream Restoration Project | October 2009 | Mgr | 2 | |
| Draft designs, obtain permits, and solicit bids, and implement the Faulk Creek and Pollard creek aspects of the Turner Stream Restoration project site | October 2009 | Mgr/FB/RT | 10/10/5 | |
| Initiate planning, design, and funding phase with a least two more of participating ownerships | June 2010 | MGR/RT/ | 10/5/5 | |
| Apply for project funds for a minimum of three project sites for the 2010 hydraulic window | December 2009 | Mgr | 15 | |
| | | | | |
| <u>Historic Skamokawa Creek Project (Dead Slough)</u> | | | | |
| Complete implementation of phase I; Inlet structure | October 2009 | Mgr/PE | 1/5 | |
| Design and permit phase II Of the Historic Skamokawa Creek Restoration Project | 2/2010 | Mgr/PE | 5/10 | |

Program Area: Technical Assistance

Goal(s): To coordinate the delivery of and maintain the District's capacity to provide technical assistance to landowners within the district promoting sound resource management.

Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program includes WSCC implementation, GSRO, and DOE CCWF.

| Activities for FY2010 | Target Dates | Person Responsible | Time(Days) Required | Estimated Funding |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Technical Assistance | | | | |
| <u>Conservation Reserve Program</u> Provide continued technical assistance to two CREP contracts (2 sites-30 acres) | Ongoing | Mgr/RT/BK | 2/7/2 | |
| Provide assistance to landowners interested in the program by assisting with getting them enrolled in the program, conducting site inventory, preparing management plans, and implementing plans (5 additional anticipated) | 6/2010 | Mgr/RT/BK | 5/10/1 | |
| <u>Livestock management assistance</u> Provide assistance to livestock operations as needed (2 operator anticipated). | 6/2010 | Mgr/RT/BK | 2/5/2 | |
| <u>Fish Passage Projects</u> Provide assistance to landowners and agencies to support applications for family forest fish passage project. Activities include conducting barrier assessments and generate project cost estimates. Implement the Flohr FFFPP Project Continue to implement the phase II Regional Culvert Inventory project | 6/2010 June 2010 6/2010 | Mgr/RT/BK Mgr/PE MGR/FBio/RT | 3/8/1 5/10 5/100/200 | |
| <u>General technical assistance</u> Assist walk-in/cal-in customers with technical assistance needs. Typically over 50 per year Assist a minimum of five landowners with the development of plans. | 6/2010 6/2010 | Mgr/RT/BK Mgr/RT/BK | 9/10/20 10/10/5 | |

Program Area: Information, Education, and Outreach

Goals: Continue providing community service activities and promote an understanding of land use through sponsorship of forums, meetings, training sessions, participation in local natural resources oriented events, and use of local media.

Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program is WSCC implementation funds.

| Activities for FY2010 | Target Dates | Person Responsible | Time(Days) Required | Estimated Funding |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Education/Outreach | | | | |
| <u>Wahkiakum High School</u> Continue to provide assistance to Wahkiakum High School with technical assistance to conduct field assessments, implement best management practices. | 6/2010 | Mgr/RT | 1/1 | |
| <u>Coached Planning Workshops</u> Partner with Department of Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension to host local workshops | 6/2010 | Mgr | 1 | |
| <u>Envirothon</u> Participate in regional Envirothon | 5/2010 | RT/BK | 1/3 | |
| <u>Wahkiakum County Fair</u> Participate in the county fair by developing and displaying an exhibit in the natural resource building. Cooperate with building exhibitors to foster a cooperative effort to manage the building and draw in fair-goers. | 8/2009 | Mgr/RT/BK | .5/1/5 | |
| <u>Miscellaneous Activities</u> Continue to participate when possible in local activities oriented around natural resources (e.g. earth day celebrations, classroom partnerships, and assistance to student groups for tree planting days, and annual tree sale). | 6/2010 | RT/BK | 2/3 | |

Appendix B
Map of Wahkiakum County Priority Areas

